

Meander§1.0

A simple game from the archives of Joel Bender.

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Description

The playing is an NxN square board with pieces that slide around, similar to the Boss-15 puzzle. Each piece connects two pairs of its sides:

Top to left and bottom to right.
Top to right and bottom to left.
Top to bottom and right to left (called a "bridge").

When you start a new game, you specify the size of the board, the kind of game (2-person, person against the computer, and person against the computer advanced mode), and how many bridges (2 or 4). For play against the computer, the user is always the first player.

When play begins, the "hole" is in the center of the board. Any set of pieces can be slid into the hole. On a 5x5 board, clicking the top center will slide the two pieces above the hole towards the hole. You'll get the picture...

After the pieces slide, a meandering line forms. The object of the game is to be the first player to connect any two sides of the board with this meandering line. Note that the corner pieces already connect two sides, so the meandering line must go through at least two pieces. In the case of the bridges, the line goes over or under and continues on to the next square.

You can undo a move, but note that you will always undo a pair of moves. If you "goofed" and the computer won, selecting undo will still leave it your turn.

One further restriction: To keep you from running a game indefinitely, you cannot make a move that is the direct inverse of the computers move.

History

This game was shown to me by my friend and boss Foster Schucker while I was a student at SUNY Fredonia. I believe that he got it from his friend and boss J. D. Eisenberg while they were at the University of Delaware, some where. J.D., if you're out there, send me a letter, will you? Last I heard you were working on Apple]['s.

The old version ran on an ADM3A terminal with a graphics expansion card, connected with a high speed (2400bps) RS-232 line to a Burroughs B6810. Any

ALGOL fans out there? You gotta love them 48bit stack machines...

After "porting" it to the IBM-PC when it first came out, I rewrote it for the Mac, added the computer opponent, and (in a brief moment of inspiration) added bridges. That addition makes things much more difficult, as you will see.

I have also mapped the game on a Rubik's Cube but couldn't figure out who won!
Neat paths though...

The future

Version 1.1 will tell you who won (rather than just the beep you get now). Version 2.0 will be in color, show you the winning path, and play other people over a network. I have another game in the works called "Crossroads" which is based on a similar concept.

If you have any other ideas, let me know!